

*Among madmen and crooks: Stella Braam's undercover journalism in the Netherlands*

In 2003, the Dutch journalist Stella Braam publishes 'Tussen gekken en gajes. Avonturen in de undercoverjournalistiek.' (*Among madmen and crooks. Adventures in undercover journalism*). The stories report on her experiences with life in the margins of Dutch society: she lives with the homeless in doorways or in the airport, works for a fraud specialist, gets involved with drug dealers and addicted to crack. In this unknown grey world she discovers questionable connections between social workers, police, justice and criminals, so that her own safety is threatened more than once.

This kind of adventurous 'immersion' journalism refers to work of Hunter S. Thompson such as 'Hell's Angels'; yet, Stella Braam creates quite a different subjectivity in her stories. According to Harbers & Broersma (2014), narrative journalism stories can be marked either by personal-engaged subjectivity (eg. Robert Fisk), or by the ironic ambiguity of the narrator (eg. Arnon Grunberg). From this perspective, I will compare the ironic style of Hunter S. Thompson to the more personal-engaged perspective of Stella Braam. This analysis will result in a critical reading of Harbers & Broersma.

Harbers, H. & Broersma, M. (2014). Between engagement and ironic ambiguity: Mediating subjectivity in narrative journalism. *Journalism* 15(5), 639 – 654.